AFFAIRS AND PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) The work of new line from Abohar to Fazilka has been included in the supplementary budget 1997-98 to be taken up after obtaining the requisite clearances, for which action has been initiated.

Railway reservation counter for M.Ps/Ex. M.Ps at the Reception Office, Parliament House

2101. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of counters working for outward reservation and inward reservation at reservation office located near reception office, Parliament House;

(b) total number of counters working for M.Ps/Ex. M.Ps and separately for persons authorised by M.Ps in that office;

(c) whether any counter number alongwith working index of each counter has been indicated anywhere in that reservation office;

(d) whether Government propose to fix some tenure of staff working in that office; and

(e) whether Government propose to issue instructions ensuring working of all counters for persons authorised by MPs when there is no MP requesting for reservation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Eight computerised reservation counters have been provided in the Parliament House premises for outward and inward reservations.

(b) Two computer terminals plus two manual counters on third floor deal MPs and Ex. MPs exclusively. In addition 2 computerised terminals in office in reception area also deal with MPs and Ex. MPs. Two terminals are available in this office for reservation of persons authorised by MPs. One terminal is for providing return journey reservations to MPs, Ex. MPs and persons authorised by MPs. In addition, there is one more terminal for enquiry.

(c) Plates indicating 'For MPs' and For Ex. MPs are fixed on counter numbers 453 & 454.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) When there is no Hon'ble MPs in the Office, two exclusive counters deal the persons authorised by VIPs.

Delay in the disposal of Public Complaints

2102. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chairman Railway Board has expressed concern over delays in the disposal of public complaints;

(b) if so, whether a conference of Additional General Managers of Zonal Railways was held at New Delhi recently in which it was emphasized to make the grievances redressal machinery effective;

(c) if so, whether any time bound action plan is being made to solve the complaints of the public; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. Additional General Managers' Conference was held on 21-04-98 in Board's Office to review the performance of public grievances redressal machinery at Zonal Railways. Such meetings are held normally two times in a year to monitor the disposal of references from Cabinet Secretariat, Deptt. of Pension and Pensioners Welfare and complaints received from VIPs such as Ministers, MPs, MLAs, other high dignitaries and general public, Chairman Railway Board exhorted all the additional General Managers, especially Northern and South Eastern Railways to take necessary steps to dispose of all the old case without further delay.

(c) and (d) Zonal Railways have been advised to dispose of all types of complaints strictly as per the target time prescribed for disposal of these complaints. The target time prescribed for disposal of each type of complaints received from various quarters are as under:—

(i) Representation/grievance received from MPs, MLAs and VIPs — 30 days.

(ii) Grievances received directly from general public — 90 days.

(iii) Grievances received directly from general public and where a detailed enquiry becomes necessary after initial scrutiny —120 days.

(iv) Finalisation of complaints referred to by Deptt. of Pension and Pensioners Welfare — 90 days.

(v) Submission of status report on complaints received from Cabinet Secretariat — 45 days.

(vi) Representations received from the Members of the Standing Committee of Parliament on Railways:—

(a) where the information is available in Board's Office itself — 10 days.

(b) where the information has to be collected from the Railways — 30 days.

Menace of touts in the Railways

2103. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Touts business continues unabated" appearing in the Hindustan Times dated the 5th June, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the concrete steps taken by the Railway Administration to check the menace of the touts and help the poor passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item has highlighted the operation of touts in cornering of reserved accommodation in trains originating from Delhi and selling the same at premium.

(c) Regular and surprise checks are conducted by the Commercial and Vigilance departments with the assistance of Railway Protection Force/Government Railway Police staff to check the activities of touts and other anti-social elements in and around the reservation offices. The drives against touts were intensified and during the year 1997-98, 324 touts were apprehended by Northern Railway. Action has been taken against them under the provisions of Railway Act, 1989. Railway staff found involved in or abetting such activities are severely taken up for penal action.

Arrest of Chairman and Members of Railway Recruitment Board

2104. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman, Railway Recruitment Board has been recently arrested alongwith the other Members of the Board on the charges of taking bribes from candidates seeking jobs;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether antecedents of the members of the Board were not verified before appointing them and if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Recently a raid was conducted by the CBI at Jaipur, in which huge amount was recovered from the then Chairman, Member Secretary and other non-official persons who were associated with Interview Committees. The then Chairman, Member Secretary and a non-official person associated with Interview Committees were taken into custody by the CBI, who has registered a case for detailed investigation into the alleged malpractices in recruitment of various posts by Railway Recruitment Board, Ajmer.

(c) Railway Recruitment Board consists of a Chairman and a Member Secretary. As per Recruitment Rules, Chairman and Member Secretary are to be selected by UPSC and before their regular appointments then antecedents are verified. In the past there had been occasions when vacancies of the post of Chairman arose, persons were appointed on adhoc basis as Chairmen and in such cases verification of antecedents was not done. Member Secretaries are appointed on adhoc basis from serving Railway officers and before doing so, vigilance clearance is obtained. In order to protect the interests of the candidates belonging to SC/ST, Minority and OBC communities, non-officials belonging to these communities used to be associated with Interview Committees. Even though they were generally known as non-official members, they were not members of the Railway Recruitment Boards and hence verification of their antecedents was not done.

इलाहाबाद जंक्शन स्टेशन पर सुविधाएं

2105. **श्री चुन्नी लाल चौधरी:** क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या इलाहाबाद जंक्शन स्टेशन पर सिविल लाइन साइड में साईकिल स्टैंड और स्कूटर स्टैंड की व्यवस्था